

#### SOVIET POLICY IN WARTIME

perous industrialized provinces. Between 1942 and the end of the war no foreign newspaperman was permitted to enter the Soviet zone. The accredited correspondents of the Associated Press, the United Press, and Reuters could move freely only in Teheran and in the south. For them the north was a mysteriously sealed area. The Iron Curtain was thus hung in Iran long before the English-speaking democracies learned of its existence.

The arrival of the Red Army resulted in panic among the more prosperous elements of the northern provinces. Many left hurriedly and settled for the duration of the war in Teheran or in the south. Foremost among them were big landowners. Their estates were left to caretakers; hence their absence permitted the Soviet authorities to take over some of their lands. Some landowners remained,, but they also felt the impact of the presence of the Red Army. There was no evidence of any immediate land reform in the north. But the Soviet authorities instituted three measures that affected the economy and structure of agriculture. These were as follows: first, the issuing of new regulations that would favor the peasantry as opposed to the landowners with regard to the sharing of crops; second, the confiscation or compulsory purchase of large amounts of grain from private individuals and government stores alike; third, the taking over of some estates and the establishment of model farms to be operated by the Red Army. The latter measure was rarely applied and could not be considered as typical for the whole of the north. However, it was important as a precedent-setting device and as a propagandist move. The farm run by the Red Army experts was

intended to be a model of modern agricultural efficiency and to provide excellent material conditions for the farm workers.

A ban imposed on the export of staple foodstuffs from the Soviet to other zones separated the northern provinces from the rest of the country even more than travel limitations. This ban primarily affected grain and rice and proved to be almost disastrous to the rest of Iran inasmuch as central and southern Iran represented a food-deficit area. In the fall of 1942 Teheran and some other centers faced starvation, and by the end of the year some deaths actually resulted from famine. The riots that broke out in the capital in December, 1942, referred to in the previous chapter, were caused by the acute